



MISSOURI. Conservationist

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The Thin Green Line

Last month I took part in a graduation ceremony for 19 new Missouri conservation agents. The graduates completed six months of training and study in our Conservation Agent Academy and are

now part of a workforce others have described as “the thin green line,” a small, professional, dedicated and well-trained cadre of conservation law enforcement officers.

For many of them, becoming an agent was their motivation through years of college and hard work prior to admission to the academy. I understand this because I followed the same path more than 30 years ago.

My perspective has changed with time. I smile at the thought that the new agents in 2009 are about the age of my sons! It is more sobering to think of the responsibilities and the risks they will take because of their devotion to protecting Missouri’s fish, forests and wildlife. They, and those who have traveled this career path before them, have my respect, admiration and gratitude. I also have a special appreciation for the agents’ families because the public expects a great deal of agents, and, often, this comes at the family’s expense.

The agents have a key role in providing customer service and earning public trust. They are educators, sources of conservation information, and ambassadors for fish, forest and wildlife resources. While this is also true for many conservation professionals, the distinction is that the agent is sworn and trained to enforce the *Missouri Wildlife Code* and related state laws. The most successful agents I have known were firm and consistent in enforcing the law, but they were also fair and compassionate toward others.

Agents are devoted to helping landowners, sportsmen and sportswomen, and all citizens with interest in the outdoors. Their devotion often manifests itself in their work to apprehend and

deter those who act unfairly and disrespectfully to harm wildlife resources or violate the rights of property owners. The majority of our citizens are respectful of fish and wildlife laws, and considerate of the rights of others. But, alas, some are not.

The agents want to be partners with landowners. In my years as an agent, I relied on many trusted landowners who kept me informed when my presence was needed. I took satisfaction in addressing the problems they reported, and I know that other agents feel the same way.

There are seasons in life, and, last month, as the new agents completed their academy training, I saw in their faces the excitement of hope and challenge as they enter a new season in their lives. I have no doubt they will produce a better conservation outcome for Missouri.

Public cooperation is still the key to apprehending poachers, and you can help by reporting crimes if you witness them.

Please put your agent’s and the Operation Game Thief (800-392-1111) numbers in your phone. Your fish and wildlife resources deserve protection from abuse, and Missouri citizens deserve protection from poachers, trespassers and vandals. I invite you to get to know your agent and to be an extension of his or her eyes and ears. Together, we can make a difference; it’s the right thing to do.

John Hoskins, director



John Hoskins, age 23, receiving his badge and law enforcement credentials from Director Larry Gale, during the 1977 Conservation Agent Academy graduation.



OUR MISSION: *To protect and manage the fish, forest and wildlife resources of the state; to serve the public and facilitate their participation in resource management activities; and to provide opportunity for all citizens to use, enjoy and learn about fish, forest and wildlife resources.*



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FLOAT ON

I can identify with the frustration expressed by Mr. McHaffie in the July *Conservationist*

about floaters disrespecting private property.

I've floated Missouri streams for 40 years, and I've seen lots of messes left by inconsiderate floaters, careless fishermen and partiers. It is my belief, however, that most people who float primarily because they love the outdoors respect both the river and riverside landowners. We leave gravel bars cleaner than we found them because we know that the future of floating depends on good relations with landowners. The future quality of our rivers, though, is largely in the hands of those private landown-

ers. That's why programs like Stream Team and the Department's Private Land Services are so important. They recognize needs and concerns on both sides of the waterline, and by working hand-in-hand with landowners, not against them, can help achieve our common goal—clean resources for all of us to use and enjoy.

Loring Bullard, author, May Day on the Finley

BEHIND THE CODE

I just had to write to tell you how much I enjoyed reading *Mandate of the People* [Inside Front Cover] by Larry Yamnitz. When I opened your August issue and paused to read what he had to say about our *Wildlife Code* and conservation laws and how these laws were established, I felt that we were in good hands.

Everyone should read this article and be informed about the good job the Conservation Department and its conservation agents do for the benefit of the people.

Bonny Briggs, Independence

FISH KILLS

Thanks for the news brief on fish kills [*Fish Kill Toll Continues*; Page 10] in the August issue. It is extremely important for Missourians to know the vital role they play in protecting our natural resources by being alert and reporting cases—both intentional and accidental—of spills that affect Missouri's waterways.

The Missouri Department of Natural Resources, which works with the Department of Conservation in the investigation of fish kills, has a hotline for reporting environmental emergencies: 573-634-2436. This line is answered by Department staff 24 hours a day, seven days a week. From this central number the Department can dispatch environmental emergency responders to any location in Missouri. The Department also has a toll free number for concerns that are not emergencies: 800-361-4827.

*Alice Geller, acting director, Field Services Division
Department of Natural Resources*

MAILBOX FROGS

I love the photo of the tree frog on the cover of the August issue! The contrast between the bright green back and the dark front of the frog is quite striking. I have many of these little singers by my house, lovely to hear each night. They are starting to show up in my mailbox, I'm not sure how. I take them in my wet hands and introduce them to a suitable tree, because they are not called "mailbox frogs."

Mary Garrett, St. Peters

NATIVE BEAUTY

I was so glad to see your article about wild grapes [August; Page 9], they are an unsung fruit here in Missouri. My grandmother, Esther Stilfield, and mother, Helen Owen, were great proponents of using what the land gave. Every year we picked bushels of the little bunches for that dark purple juice. Mom made the best jelly for us and to give away. I never knew any other until my teens and can remember tasting jelly from the store and saying it had no flavor. Wild grapes are part of the old way of life that is missed out on by so many people.

Frank Owen, Maysville



Reader Photo

GARDEN VARIETY

Seventeen-year-old Michael Roberts captured this picture of a garden spider in his backyard. Roberts is taking a photography class and enjoys photographing a variety of things. Roberts said the spider stuck around for about three weeks catching and eating insects. Garden spiders are typical orb weavers, and can often be found building webs in gardens and grassy areas near houses.



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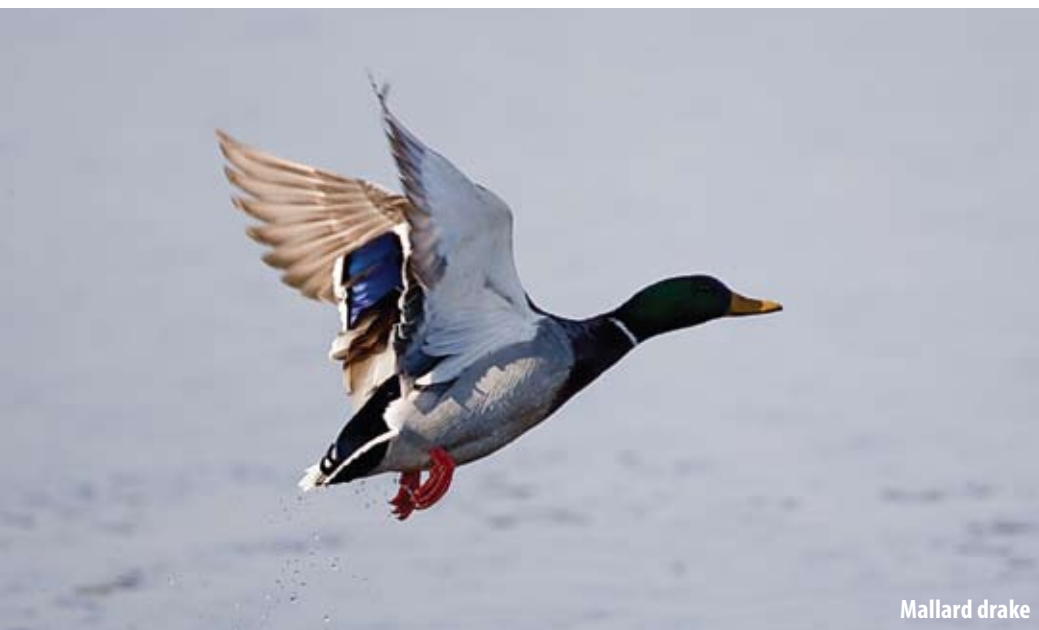
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Printed with soy ink



Mallard drake

OUTDOOR RECREATION

Waterfowl Seasons Coming Up

Duck hunters' long wait is almost over, and prospects are bright. Numbers of mallards and most other ducks are above long-term averages. This year's nest success was good, so many of the birds hunters encounter this fall will never have seen a decoy or a duck blind. With a little help from the weather, 2009 could be a year to remember. Season dates for all ducks are:

North Zone:	Youth season	Oct. 24 and 25
	Regular season	Oct. 31 through Dec. 29
Middle Zone:	Youth season	Oct. 31 and Nov. 1
	Regular season	Nov. 7 through Jan. 5
South Zone:	Youth season	Nov. 21 and 22
	Regular season	Nov. 26 through Jan. 24

The daily limit is six ducks, including four mallards (no more than two mallard hens), three wood ducks, two scaup, two redheads, two hooded mergansers, one canvasback, one black duck, one pintail and one mottled duck.

The season for blue, snow and Ross's geese is Oct. 31 through Jan. 31 statewide with a daily limit of 20 and no possession limit. White-fronted goose season is Nov. 26 through Jan. 31 statewide (daily/possession limits 2/4). This year's season for Canada geese is Sept. 26 through Oct. 7 (limits 3/6) and Nov. 26 through Jan. 31 (limits 2/4) statewide.

Full details of waterfowl hunting regulations are available in the 2009–2010 *Waterfowl Hunting Digest*, available wherever hunting permits are sold or online at www.MissouriConservation.org/7559.

PLANTS & ANIMALS

Wetland Acreage Expands

The recent dedication of an addition to Big Muddy National Fish and Wildlife Refuge demonstrates the power of conservation part-

nerships. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was about \$20,000 short of the purchase price of 502 acres adjacent to the refuge's Overton Bottoms Unit. Ducks Unlimited stepped up to the plate with \$15,000, and the National Wild Turkey Federation chipped in \$5,000. The result was

a 4.4-percent increase in the size of the refuge, which now covers 11,815 acres.

Missouri DU Chairman Tom Shryock said thousands of citizen volunteers made the 502-acre refuge addition possible through fundraising work. He said the project will benefit many species of wildlife and people through wetland preservation, erosion control, water retention and water quality.

Congress has authorized expansion of the refuge up to 60,000 acres in units along the Missouri River. Although the Missouri River's popularity is increasing among waterfowl, turkey and deer hunters, Manager Tom Bell said he still considers it Missouri's most under-utilized outdoor recreation resource.

CLEAN WATER

Zebra Mussels on the Move

Routine plankton sampling at Pomme de Terre Lake turned up a surprise — zebra mussel larvae. Conservation Department workers found the free-floating larvae, known as veligers, in samples taken at several locations around the lake. Since Truman Reservoir is downstream from Pomme de Terre, it is only a matter of time until the larger lake is infested. This illustrates anglers' and boaters' critical role in slowing the spread of potentially devastating invasive aquatic species. For more information, visit www.MissouriConservation.org/8260 or write to MDC, Zebra Mussel, PO Box 180, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0180 or e-mail pubstaff@mdc.mo.gov.

OUTDOOR RECREATION

Henges Renovation

The rifle and pistol range at the Jay Henges Shooting Range and Outdoor Education Center on Forest 44 Conservation Area in St. Louis County will close for 10 months of renovation starting Dec. 1. Trap, shotgun patterning and archery ranges will remain open during the renovation. St. Louis-area rifle and pistol shooters are encouraged to visit the range at August A. Busch Memorial CA in nearby Defiance. For directions, visit www.MissouriConservation.org/a4901.

Wildlife Compact Growing

During Fiscal Year 2009, the Missouri Conservation Commission suspended hunting and fishing privileges of 164 people who committed serious or repeated wildlife code violations. Those who lose hunting and fishing privileges in Missouri lose the same privileges in 30 other states, too. That is because Missouri belongs to the Interstate Wildlife Violators Compact. Participating states honor one another's privilege suspensions. IWVC members include Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, South Dakota,

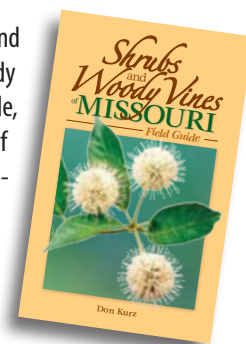
Tennessee, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin and Wyoming. Four states are in the process of joining the IWVC, and three others have passed the legislation necessary to join. The average hunter or angler who intentionally or unintentionally commits a violation and gets a ticket does not have to worry about running afoul of the Compact. The only people affected are repeat offenders or those who commit very serious violations. Missourians can turn in poachers by calling the toll-free Operation Game Thief Hot Line 800-392-1111. Cash rewards are available for poaching reports leading to arrests.

CONSERVATION EDUCATION

Shrub and Vine Field Guide

Amateur naturalists will find all they need to

identify 170 woody shrubs and vines in the *Shrubs and Woody Vines of Missouri Field Guide*, a daypack-sized version of a large-format book published in 1997. The book has color illustrations, distribution maps and habitat notes on 133 shrubs and 37 vine species. It is available at conservation nature centers and regional offices statewide for \$7.50 plus tax. You also can order by calling toll-free 877-521-8632, or online at www.mdcnatureshop.com. Shipping and handling charges apply to phone and electronic orders.



(continued on Page 6)



ASK THE OMBUDSMAN

Q: Why is the Youth Deer and Turkey Hunting Permit no longer available?

A: The Youth Deer and Turkey Hunting Permit led to confusion, especially regarding

the youth portions of the firearms deer season and also the youth spring turkey season. The permit is no longer available as of July 1, 2009, but any Youth Deer and Turkey Hunting Permits purchased for the 2009 spring turkey season will be valid for the 2009 fall deer and turkey seasons (through Jan. 3, 2010). In place of the youth permit, resident and non-resident youth, ages 6 through 15, can now purchase deer and turkey permits for half the cost of resident permits. The stricter bag limits imposed under the youth permit are replaced by the limits for the resident permits.

Q: What has happened to all of the songbirds around my feeders? I'm not seeing them around like I did earlier in the year.

A: There are several reasons why you may be noticing fewer birds in early October. Many migratory species that spend the summer in Missouri have moved south for the winter. Birds that summer to the north but move south into Missouri for the winter have not yet arrived in great numbers. With a few strong cold fronts, many of those birds will reach Missouri. There is also some sorting of ranges among our resident birds that occurs at this time of year. The cardinals you see in your yard in the summer are often not the same cardinals you will see in the winter. By the end of October, the number of birds around your feeder should increase.



Ombudsman Tim Smith will respond to your questions, suggestions or complaints concerning Department of Conservation programs. Write him at PO Box 180, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0180, call him at 573-522-4115, ext. 3848, or e-mail him at Ombudsman@mdc.mo.gov.

OUTDOOR RECREATION

Antler-Point Restrictions

Deer harvest data show a significant increase in the number of older bucks taken by hunters in the 29 counties where the antler-point restriction went into effect in 2004. Resource Scientist Lonnie Hansen has been studying the number of 1.5-, 2.5-, 3.5- and 4.5-year-old bucks. He found that in the fourth year of the restrictions, hunters in affected counties shot 20 percent more 2.5-year old bucks, 62 percent more 3.5-year-olds and 202 percent more 4.5-year-olds, compared to nearby counties designated as "controls."

"Increased age equates to increased antler size," said Hansen. "You have to be a bit cautious about the big changes in 3.5- and 4.5-year-olds because the number of big deer shot by hunters is small, and small sample sizes make for less reliable conclusions. Still, the numbers do seem to indicate an important trend."

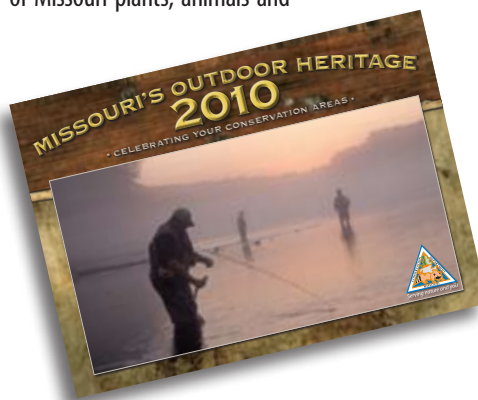
In long-term studies, bucks' antlers attained only 25 to 35 percent of their maximum size when they were 1.5 years old. The figure increased to

60 percent for 2.5-year-olds. Three and one-half-year-old bucks' antlers were 75 to 80 percent of maximum size, while those 4.5 years old grew antlers that were 90 to 95 percent as large as they would ever grow.

CONSERVATION EDUCATION

2010 Calendars On Sale

The *2010 Natural Events Calendar* and *Missouri Outdoor Heritage Calendar* go on sale this month at conservation nature centers and regional offices statewide. In addition to stunning photographs of Missouri plants, animals and



places, this year's *Natural Events Calendar* celebrates 25 years of publication with reminiscences by long-time calendar editor Bernadette Dryden. Other bonuses include monthly tips for native plant gardeners. The *Missouri Outdoor Heritage Calendar* shines a spotlight on fish and game, hunting and fishing, past and present. Color photos of monster muskellunge, boss gobblers, trophy deer and drying raccoon pelts are sandwiched between black-and-white memories of Missouri's hunting heritage. The calendars sell for \$7 per copy, plus shipping and handling and sales tax where applicable. You also can buy copies by calling toll-free 877-521-8632 or through The Nature Shop, www.mdcNatureShop.com.



CONSERVATION EDUCATION

Youth Trapping Clinic

Join us at Whetstone Creek Conservation Area in Williamsburg for this fun and exciting educational clinic Saturday,



Oct. 24 from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Sunday, Oct. 25 from 6 a.m. to 11 a.m. Learn basic trapping techniques

including water sets, dry land sets, trapping equipment care and maintenance, skinning, fleshing and proper fur handling. Under the guidance of experienced trappers, participants will set their own traps. There is no fee for Missourians. Lunch and dinner will be served on Saturday and breakfast on Sunday. This program is open to ages 11 to 17 and their parent or adult mentor. Reservations are required. For more details or to register, e-mail brian.flowers@mdc.mo.gov or call 573-884-6861.

“I AM CONSERVATION”



Robert Richter

Edna A. Richter Estate Donates \$2.2M

by David McAllister

An all-around sportsman, angler and hunter, Robert Richter was well-suited to his position as a conservation agent. “Robert just loved the outdoors; he loved everything about it,” says Judy Kinkead, a close family friend. “He also loved his work. He couldn’t imagine doing anything else.” Robert was encouraged in his outdoor pursuits, and later in his conservation career, by his parents, Edna A. Richter and Paul Richter Jr. “Paul enjoyed both fishing and hunting,” says Kinkead, “while Edna’s favorite vacation combination was fishing and shopping!”

Mindful of her husband’s love for hunting and fishing and the satisfaction that her only child derived from his work as a conservation agent, Edna A. Richter designated the Conservation Department as the primary beneficiary of her estate. When she passed away in February 2007, she left funds exceeding \$2.2 million to the Department. In accordance with the terms of her estate, the funds will be used in her name and the names of her husband, Paul Richter Jr., and her son, Robert Richter, to promote the hunting, fishing and shooting sports.

Edna A. Richter was born in 1922 in St. Charles and was employed for 25 years with American Car Foundry Industries. Her husband, Paul Richter Jr., who preceded his wife in death, was born in Sedalia in 1921 and was a WWII veteran, serving as a paramedic in both the Navy and Marines. He was at Iwo Jima when the famous flag-raising photograph was taken. He was also a sales representative for Metropolitan Life Insurance Company for 35 years. The couple married in 1948. Their son, Robert Richter, was born in 1949 and served as a conservation agent in Benton County prior to his untimely death in 1981. ▲





Pucker Up



Persimmon trees provide a sweet summer finale in their fall-ripening fruits.

story and photos by
LARRY R. BECKETT

Spring chores of tilling, fertilizing and planting a garden may be long vanished from your to-do list, but Mother Nature is still busy producing her own late-season garden. A wide variety of wild edibles are produced late in the year, and one of the most anticipated is the ripened fruit of the persimmon tree.

The common persimmon tree, *Diospyros virginiana*, is one of only a few species of the family Ebenaceae living in the United States. The genus name is derived from two Greek words—*Dios*, which refers to the Greek god Zeus, and *puros*, referring to wheat. The less literal translation means “food for the gods.” The common name appears to have originated from the Lenape Indians. They referred to it as “pasimenan” which we now call persimmon.

Thick-skinned & hard-hearted

The persimmon tree is native to the eastern United States, with a range from east Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas and Louisiana; east to Florida, north to Massachusetts, and west to Missouri, Illinois, Indiana and eastern Kansas. Persimmon trees can be found in fields, fencerows, ditches and many other unwelcoming environments. They form thickets by spreading from sucker roots, much like the common sassafras tree. In fact, they are commonly found growing among sassafras and eastern red cedar trees in dry locations. New habitats are colonized when they are planted outside of their native area as commercial or ornamental trees.

A persimmon tree typically ranges in height from 35- to 60-feet tall and can spread up to 35 feet wide. They grow largest on sandy, clay soils in bottomlands, and the record reached 132 feet tall with a 37-foot spread.

Persimmon trees produce some of the hardest wood known. Osage orange is the only producer of harder wood in North America. The heartwood of a persimmon is dark blackish-brown on mature trees, and is often used to make the heads of golf clubs, billiard cues and patterned flooring. It can take more than 100 years for the sapwood to turn to heartwood. The wood is very close-grained and can weigh up to 53 pounds per cubic foot when dry.

The bark of a persimmon tree is hard, thick and dark gray-black in color. It is textured in unique, square, scaly blocks and can develop to more than 2



Persimmon tree bark is hard, thick and dark gray-black in color. Many people compare it to alligator hide in texture and appearance.

inches thick. Many people compare it to alligator hide in texture and appearance.

Persimmon trees are rarely attacked by insects or damaged by animals. They are, however, vulnerable to ground fires and some disease. A fungus, called persimmon wilt, has caused severe losses among native persimmon trees in Tennessee and North Carolina. Exotic species of *Diospyros*, such as those found in your local grocery store, are resistant to the wilt, but do not produce fruits that are as delicious as the native species.

Their sweeter side


The fruit of a persimmon tree is actually a berry with several seeds and is about the shape of a plum. Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto even described the persimmon as a “delicious little plum.” Some people believe that the persimmon fruit is not edible until after a frost. This is false information as there are several early ripening varieties



“Stopping by the persimmon tree for a snack on the way from deer camp to a tree stand is often as traditional as the camp itself.”



The fruit of a persimmon tree is actually a berry with several seeds and is about the shape of a plum

A young boy with short brown hair, wearing a green and yellow plaid shirt under blue denim overalls, stands in a wooded area. He is looking up and reaching his right arm towards a cluster of ripe, reddish-orange persimmons hanging from a tree branch. The background is filled with green and brown foliage, suggesting an autumn setting. A yellow text box is in the upper left corner.

If persimmons squish with ease and feel as if they might be too mushy, then they are ripe for the picking.



Persimmon Bread

2 Cups Persimmon Pulp
 2 Teaspoons Baking Soda
 1 Teaspoon Lemon Juice
 3 ½ Cups Flour
 1 Teaspoon Salt
 ½ Teaspoon Baking Powder
 1 Teaspoon Allspice
 1 ½ Cups Raisins
 1 Teaspoon Ground Cinnamon
 ½ Teaspoon Ground Nutmeg
 4 Eggs
 2 ¾ Cups Sugar
 ¾ Cups Vegetable Oil
 1 Teaspoon Vanilla
 1 Cup Chopped Walnuts

Mix persimmon pulp, baking soda and lemon juice in a large bowl. Set aside. Sift together flour, salt, baking powder, allspice, cinnamon and nutmeg. Set aside. Beat eggs until slightly thickened. Beat in sugar, then oil and vanilla. Add flour and persimmon mixtures. Stir in walnuts and raisins. Pour into two greased loaf pans and bake for 1 hour and 15 minutes at 350 degrees.

Persimmon Tea

Place 1-2 teaspoons of dried, crushed persimmon leaves in a teapot. Fill the teapot with hot water and let the leaves steep for five minutes and serve. Pour slowly or use a small strainer to keep the leaves from going into the cup. For a subtler flavor, use fewer leaves or more water.



that can mature between July and September. However, the most common variety in the Midwest ripens when the temperatures begin to drop in the fall. The ripening often coincides with the fall hunting season, and stopping by the persimmon tree for a snack on the way from deer camp to a tree stand is often as traditional as the camp itself.

If you ever eat an unripe persimmon, you will know it. The famous Captain John Smith said, “If it is not ripe, it will draw a man’s mouth awrie with much torment.” The bitterness actually comes from the astringent tannin in the fruit. When ripe they become wrinkled and the pulp becomes mushy.

In general, there are two types of people in the world, those that have never heard of a persimmon and those that have suffered the puckering effect of an unripe fruit offered to them by a seemingly generous friend.

Animals also eat the fruit of persimmon trees, including hogs, fox, raccoons, skunks, opossums, woodchucks, squirrels, mice, deer and quail. Many a wise and successful deer hunter has placed his stand overlooking a persimmon tree and waited on a deer to give in to the yearning of its taste buds.

As told in story and song, “Most ‘possum hunts end at the foot of a ‘simmon tree.” In Audubon’s famous picture

of opossums, he painted them high up in the tree eating the persimmons. Animals that eat the fruit help to disperse persimmon seeds to areas far from those reached by the sucker roots.

The persimmon tree provides food beyond its fruit. Although cattle avoid the leaves, they are readily eaten by wild turkeys. The leaves can also be used to make tea that tastes much like sassafras tea. Some people even roast the seeds and grind them to make persimmon coffee. According to historical records, Confederate soldiers were among those that used the coffee substitute.

As you head to the woods this fall, take notice of those bright orange fruits hanging temptingly from the alligator-skinned tree. If they resist when you give them a gentle squeeze between your thumb and finger, turn and run from those bitter little fruits. Or better yet, save a few for your “friends” to try when you get home. If they squish with ease and feel as if they might be too mushy, then they are ripe for the picking. Eat a few while you are there, and then grab a bag full to take with you and make some delicious persimmon bread or cookies. Your family will thank you and more people will come to appreciate the wonderful autumn fruit produced by the persimmon tree. ▲





Logger *of the* Year

CLIENTS AND
PROFESSIONAL
FORESTERS SAY
JIM ZWYERS
DOES HIS BEST
FOR CUSTOMERS
AND FORESTS.

by JIM LOW,
photo by DAVID STONNER

Getting the most value from a stand of timber while ensuring the future productivity of the land is a challenge that Missouri's 2009 Logger of the Year takes seriously.

Jim Zwyers, of O'Fallon, received the Missouri Department of Conservation's top honor for timber harvesters July 25. State Forester Lisa Allen presented the award at the annual meeting of the Missouri Forest Products Association.

“He treats all of the land he works on, whether it is private property or public land, like it is his own and gives it the respect it deserves.”

To receive this honor, a logger must be nominated by a professional, degree-holding forester. Zwyers’ performance was so remarkable that he received nominations from foresters in two districts.

St. Louis Region Forestry Resource Technician Jeff Bakameyer nominated Zwyers in part because he considers him “a man of good character and high integrity.”

“When he gives you his word, you can take it to the bank,” said Bakameyer. “He treats all of the land he works on, whether it is private property or public land, like it is his own and gives it the respect it deserves.”

As an example, Bakameyer cited an instance when Zwyers was harvesting timber for a private landowner in St. Charles County and noticed that the land had a developing maple tree invasion. Under certain circumstances, maples can take over commercial forestland, providing fewer benefits for wildlife than the oak trees that previously grew there.

“Jim knew the landowner wanted to manage his land properly,” said Bakameyer, “so he took

the initiative to tell the owner about the downside of having maples everywhere. He even told him that the Conservation Department might be able to help him pay for treating the maples. Later, he called me to be sure who the landowner should talk to for help. When we have loggers in our area preaching about the downsides of maple, it almost brings a tear to my eye.”

Central Region Resource Forester Josh Stevens shares Bakameyer’s admiration for Zwyers’ commitment to customer service. He is equally impressed with business savvy that not only improves his and his customers’ bottom lines but makes better forest management possible.

“Jim cuts small diameter trees and large diameter,” said Stevens. “He sorts the logs and sells to the highest bidder, whether it be stave, veneer, pallet or firewood. He realized that being in the firewood business gave him a competitive advantage for small and defective timber. He bought a feller-buncher (an expensive piece of equipment that rapidly cuts and gathers several trees at a time) that he now uses for timber sales and timber-stand-improvement cuts at the same time. What is just as impressive is the lack of damage to soils and trees in a stand where he has worked with the feller-buncher. He gets every bit of value for the timber owner, while improving his own bottom line and protecting the resource.”

Stevens also noted a case where Zwyers helped a fellow logger who was injured on the job. “He stepped in and handled many of the other logger’s projects until he recovered. This is just another example of Jim’s selfless ethic,” said Stevens.

Logger of the Year Award recipients receive a framed certificate and a Stihl chainsaw. The award honors “the best of the best” in the logging industry. ▲

Award Criteria

Loggers can’t apply for the Logger of the Year Award, but professional foresters may nominate them based on the following criteria.

- Must be a logger operating in Missouri.
- Must have completed the Professional Timber Harvester’s Training Program sponsored by the Missouri Forest Products Association and be current with the qualifications (or equivalent training if the logger is an out-of-state resident).
- Must be practicing sustainable forest management, have good forest product utilization and be implementing best management practices.
- Must have low residual tree damage on their harvests.
- Must be practicing safe work habits and preferably using all the safety equipment.
- Must have no recent complaints or issues working with landowners and foresters on timber sales.

by NICHOLE LECLAIR TERRILL, photos by CLIFF WHITE



HAUNTED HABITATS

These nature-based events aren't scary, but they are a frightfully good time!

Harry Potter, a high-heeled princess, and a skipping lizard shriek past on their way to the orientation booth,

hoping to be first in line at the trail-head. They pause at the counter, collect a sack for the night's goodies and follow the flickering pumpkin lanterns to where their guide awaits. She straightens her plush spider hat and grins mischievously at her charges.

As the line and the suspense grow for the night's main feature, the princess taps her pink pointy toes on the pavement and nibbles at a handful of kettle korn. The lizard is far less reserved.



Finally, the guide breaks the tension. She waves them onto the trail with a flourish, calling, "Welcome to Runge! Now let's go visit the creatures of the night!"

The first group of children surges through the entrance, jostling for position on the narrow paved trail. Masks pushed up on heads and parents in tow, they giggle and shush one another as they peer into the darkening woods. Even without the show, it's rare and exciting to be on the trails at night.

The theme of Runge Conservation Nature Center's 2008 Haunted Habits event is Nature's Night Shift, and the group is off to meet some of Missouri's nocturnal creatures as they go about their after-hours lives.

Around each turn of the lantern-lit trail, the group encounters a new character. The first is a singing sphinx moth, tending her garden. "A gardener helps things to groooow," she trills, and explains that night-blooming flowers require moths and bats to pollinate them, as the bees and butterflies are tucked in for the night.

The next stop features humorous tales from a dancing skunk, Mephitis Mephitis, who works the night shift as an exterminator of rodents and insects. "Do you know what I really, really like?" she asks confidently, smacking her lips at the guide's hat. "Spiders!" she answers, winking at her laughing audience. Then the group is off to meet a well-traveled snow goose who explains how some animals manage to navigate and migrate at



night. Everyone stocks up on prizes and treats along the way.

"This is our third year living in Jefferson City, and our third year at this event," says Emily Rogers, mother of clone troopers Stephan, age 7, and Nathan, age 3, en route to the last stop. "We saw the listing in the newspaper and it's been a countdown since. 'Mom, it's five days! Mom, now it's two days! Mom, it's today!' The volunteers are just fantastic and the kids learn a lot. We really enjoy ourselves."



Above: At the Haunted Habitats program at Runge Conservation Nature Center, a naturalist dressed up as a sphinx moth explains how night-blooming flowers require moths and bats to pollinate them.



Left: At an obstacle course station, children simulate beavers dragging logs to build their lodge.

HAUNT AN EVENT NEAR YOU

*All events are free and open to all ages.

Anita B. Gorman Conservation Discovery Center **KANSAS CITY**

Nature's Nightshift • Oct. 23, 4–8 p.m.

Our days are becoming shorter and our nights are lengthening, making this a perfect time to get a glimpse into the nocturnal world. As the sun sets, the animal nightshift gears up for survival. Explore mysteries of the night by learning about the bioluminescence of fireflies, bat echolocation and searching for spider eyes. In addition, Lakeside Nature Center is bringing both a screech owl and barn owl, with presentations from 4–7 p.m. on the hour. No reservations required.

▲ For more information, call 816-759-7300.

Burr Oak Woods Conservation Nature Center **BLUE SPRINGS**

Nature ... Through the Looking Glass
Oct. 16 and 17, 6–9 p.m.

By and by we see a rabbit appear on the trail in front of us. Curiosity prevails. Of course we follow him. There is a looking glass just ahead on the trail. Where did that come from? And what is on the other side? Experience the enchanted forest as we step through the looking glass and discover Hansel and Gretel, Beauty and the Beast, Cinderella, Pinocchio and even Dorothy on the other side! There will be a few tickets available the nights of the event, but advanced registration is requested. Registration begins Oct. 1 at 8:30 a.m. and runs each weekday from 8:30–4:30 p.m. Tickets are assigned for hikes during the 6, 7 and 8 p.m. time period (hikes start every 15 minutes during the hour).

▲ For reservations, call 816-655-6263 and dial ext. 223 for 6–7 p.m. time slots Friday or Saturday; dial ext. 232 for 7–8 p.m. slots Friday or Saturday; or dial ext. 233 for 8–9 p.m. time slots Friday or Saturday.

Cape Girardeau Conservation Nature Center **CAPE GIRARDEAU**

Creatures of the Night: The Lizard of Oz
Oct. 23 and 24, 6:30–9:30 p.m.

"I would waddle and be merry; life just would not be so dreary, if I only had some food," sings the Armadillo as he meets Dorothy on their quest to visit the Lizard of Oz. In a world where habitat is poor, the Lizard promises a return to a more natural environment where all creatures can find food, water, shelter and space. Join Dorothy and all her friends as they guide you down the yellow brick road to the Land of Oz. Inside the nature center there will be crafts, presentations and much more. No reservations required.

▲ For more information, call 573-290-5218.

Powder Valley Conservation Nature Center **KIRKWOOD**

Nightlife Boogie • Oct. 16, 6–9 p.m.

Creatures are lurking in the night! Spend an evening at Powder Valley and learn about Missouri's nocturnal animals. Bring the whole family for storytelling, guided hikes, live animals, door prizes and more. Can you find a spider just by using your nose? Sign up at the door for a spider sniff! Come dressed as your favorite Missouri animal. Come early as the live animals are here for only a limited time. No reservations required.

▲ For more information, call 314-301-1500.

Runge Conservation Nature Center **JEFFERSON CITY**

Haunted Habitats • Oct. 23, 6–9 p.m. • Rain date Oct. 24, 6–9 p.m.

From armadillos to zebra swallowtails, Missouri is home to a multitude of wild animals. Learn your ABCs with a natural twist at this year's Haunted Habitats event. Walk the Alphabet Trail and meet some of our Missouri animal friends, then venture inside to find more of our Animal Alphabet! Enjoy games, kettle korn, the Alphabet Obstacle Course, lighted pumpkins and more. No reservations required.

▲ For more information, call 573-526-5544.

Springfield Conservation Nature Center **SPRINGFIELD**

Little Red Riding Hood's Forest Foray
Oct. 29 and Oct. 30, 6:30–9:30 p.m.

Join Little Red Riding Hood as she faces her fear of the dark and learns some important lessons about how animals survive during this Halloween-style look at conservation. Guided hikes will be led on a first-come, first-served basis with the last hike leaving at 9 p.m. Indoor activities are also included. This event is guaranteed to be insightful, not frightful! No reservations required.

▲ For more information, call 417-888-4237.

Twin Pines Conservation Education Center **WINONA**

National Scenic Riverways' Haunting of the Hills at Alley Spring
Oct. 10 and 11, Sat. 10 a.m. –4 p.m.
and 7–9:30 p.m., Sun. 10 a.m. –3 p.m.

Rather than hosting a separate event at the center, Twin Pines joins forces with National Scenic Riverways to help present Haunting of the Hills. Enjoy traditional Ozark storytelling and music amid the beautiful setting of the Alley Mill and Alley Spring. Traditional Ozark craftsmen will be demonstrating skills of yesteryear on the grounds. Be sure to join the hunt for the Karkaghne monster (a spider hike) and visit with divers in the spring to learn more about this special habitat.

▲ For more information, call 573-226-3945.

Eventually, the trail winds down, but the children do not. The guide releases them back into the wild of the courtyard and they scatter like leaves.

The Party Continues

A zebra in distress requires detangling from the giant rope spider web, but otherwise, the obstacle course is a scene of happy chaos. At various stations, 'spiderlings' tend their web, 'beavers' sort and pile their logs, the 'crawdads' explore their burrow, the 'armadillos' practice their jumps, and the 'nightcrawlers' wriggle like pros. Powered by plentiful cocoa, cider and treats, many of the children have energy for more than one circuit.

As the temperature has sunk with the sun, the indoor festivities soon

draw the greater part of the crowd. Inside the nature center, the party only gets wilder, and so do the stars of the evening—a great horned owl, an unusually patient and friendly bat, and a supporting cast of spiders, snakes and other nature center regulars. Eager fingers, both child and adult, take advantage of all the petting opportunities.

While some visitors join interpretive activities, enjoy exhibits based on the nocturnal lives of animals and play games to win prizes, others stop by the art room to make their own masks. Costumed volunteers answer questions, pique interest in the wild world, maintain order, locate parents and direct traffic to bathrooms, snacks and trails.

The evening's momentum seems never to wane, but eventually the lantern candles gutter down, and the scent of charred pumpkin mixes with the hint of popcorn and autumn woods on the wind. Happy-tired families follow paths or catch shuttle busses to their cars, and young minds, full of the wonders of nature at night, start counting down the days until they can haunt some habitats again. ▲

Inside the Runge Conservation Nature Center, a great horned owl, courtesy of Missouri Wild Bird Sanctuary, greets visitors. Plenty of indoor and outdoor activities await families across Missouri at this year's events.



TROPHY DEER CARE

Proper care from field to freezer
results in better mounts and meat.

by DAVID MEGAHAN

Many years ago I happened to see the late Euell Gibbons on *The Tonight Show*. He remarked, “Modern man is estranged from nature.” While I don’t entirely agree, I understand his point. Our culture is becoming more urban. “Making meat”—and, by extension, “making skins”—is completely mysterious to many. Even the simple task of honing a knife-edge has become a lost art. Most of our grandfathers carried a razor-sharp pocketknife; today, the majority of us may as well be carrying a butter knife.

Whether you’re a novice looking for a place to start, or an advanced hunter looking to improve your harvest-care skills, following these instructions will produce the best results for both wall and table.

Transporting and cooling

Let’s start with field dressing. Field dressing instructions abound, so I will cover what I believe are the critical areas.

For a modern shoulder mount it is important to stop the ventral incision no higher than the thoracic cavity (see *Fig A on Page 24*). Most of the clients I talk to are concerned that this makes it difficult to remove the heart and lungs. However, the removal of the heart and lungs is completely unnecessary. The highest populations of bacteria and cause for spoilage lie below the diaphragm. It is only necessary to remove the stomach, intestines, etc. Later, after the animal is caped, the chest cavity may be opened and the heart, lungs and esophagus removed.

One major mistake I’ve seen is not splitting the pelvic bone. Yes, the lower intestine and fecal material can be removed without opening the pelvic region. However, it is imperative that the major muscles (i.e. hams, shoulders)

be allowed to rapidly cool. This can only be accomplished if the legs are able to splay open while transporting the animal. It is best if an animal not lie in a vehicle on its side with legs closed. Instead, the deer should lie on its back with legs open. This allows for better cooling and surface drying of fluids and deprives bacteria the two primary conditions they need to thrive: warmth and moisture.

Often a deer is brought to me to cape. Upon opening the legs to attach the skinning gambrel, my nose reminds me why the pelvic bone should be split and the legs kept open.

Washing the inside of deer

We live in a fastidious society, and are especially careful with food handling practices. But hosing (or washing) the inside of a deer really should be avoided. By definition a body cavity is just that—a cavity—space and air. So what is being washed? There are two very small muscles (commonly referred to as the “catfish”), but other than that there is nothing edible inside the cavity. If stomach or intestine material has accidentally spilled into the cavity, simply take some damp rags and wipe it clean.

Introducing water into a warm carcass, especially with the skin still in place, will invite bacteria to throw a party. I would encourage anyone who doubts me to hang around my studio during deer season. You only need to bring one thing—your nose. A hosed-out deer will announce its presence from several feet away.

It has been argued that professional packing houses wash beef carcasses, so why should hunters not wash deer? I once visited such an establishment. First, immediately after being dispatched, the animal is hung on a rail. The body is immediately skinned, hosed off, and while still



Taxidermist David Megahan mounts a deer at his place in Columbia.

PHOTO BY DAVID STONNER

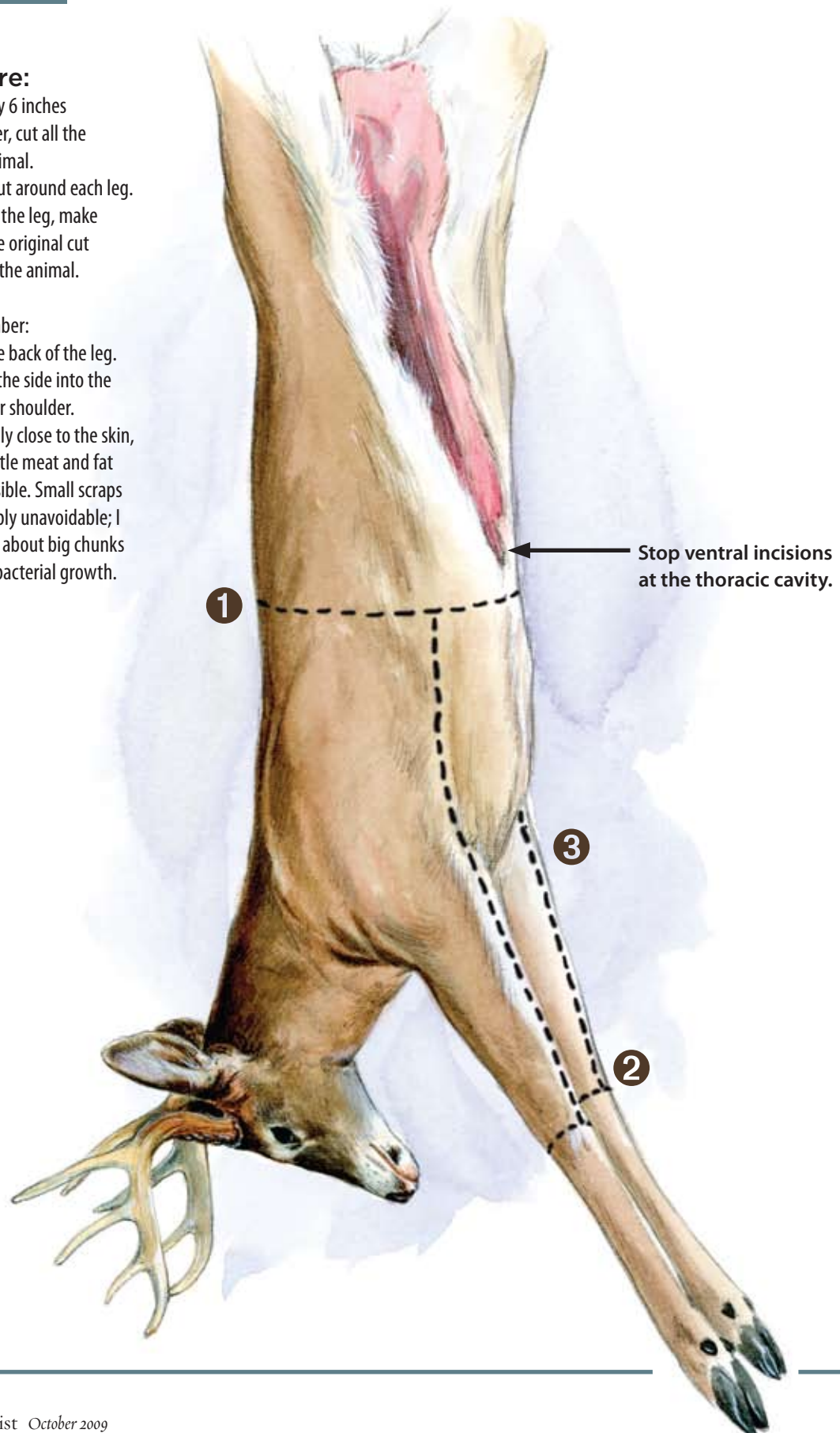
FIGURE A

The procedure:

- ❶ Start approximately 6 inches behind the shoulder, cut all the way around the animal.
- ❷ At the knee joint, cut around each leg.
- ❸ On the back side of the leg, make a cut straight to the original cut that circumscribes the animal.

Some points to remember:

- Stay straight on the back of the leg.
- Do not stray off to the side into the armpit or brisket or shoulder.
- Try to cut reasonably close to the skin, so as to leave as little meat and fat on the skin as possible. Small scraps of meat are probably unavoidable; I am just concerned about big chunks that would invite bacterial growth.



hanging from the rail, is promptly moved into cold storage. This process is simply not available to the average hunter.

All that is necessary is a split pelvic bone, legs open and allowing air circulation to dry out any remaining fluids.

Aging

The third aspect of good care is aging. I wholeheartedly support hanging a deer for at least a week, assuming the air temperature is reasonably cool. How cool depends on the average hourly temperature within a 24-hour period. For example, I have hung deer when the temperature during the afternoon reached 65 degrees. However, during the night, the temperature declined to the upper 30s. The previously mentioned 65 degrees occurred at 2:30 p.m. and lasted only an hour or so before declining. The internal temperature of the deer never rose above 40 degrees.

Aging should not be done until after the cape and head are removed for mounting.

First, the trachea and esophagus need to be removed before hanging. This can only be done by first removing the skin (cape). Second, the aging process causes breakdown of the tissues, which tenderizes the meat. The unintended consequence could be the deterioration of the skin which would result in hair slippage. Take the deer to a taxidermist first. After caping, the carcass can be hung. I have used bags made out of old cotton bed sheets. The animal is completely enclosed in the bag during the aging process. This has helped considerably when the weather has turned warmer and a few insects temporarily appeared.

Caping

Clients often ask me whether it is OK to take their deer to a meat processor and have the caping done there. I strongly recommend that the deer be brought to the taxidermist first. I am sure that most processors do their best to cape a deer for mounting; however, their expertise is likely not taxidermy.

For those hunters who prefer to do it themselves or who are interested in further honing their skills, the basics of caping are quite simple—really!

People often believe that skinning the entire deer is the answer: “I brought you the whole skin, so I know there is enough to work with.” Nothing could be further from the truth and is the most common caping error that I encounter. If the skin is cut incorrectly, it doesn’t matter how much of it is there. Additionally, because we use the term “shoulder mount,” the assumption is that shoulder skin is the most important. In my 30 years of mounting deer, I have never been short-changed on shoulder skin—never. If the skin is cut short, it is invariably from the front of the deer, i.e. the legs, armpits and brisket. However, on a mounted deer

(see photo on Page 23), you’ll notice that the beginning of the legs is part of the mount. Logically, if part of the legs is needed, then any skin next to the legs is also needed (armpit and brisket). From a side view, it is obvious that more skin is needed from the front of the animal than from the back and shoulders. I cannot emphasize this enough.

Clients tell me they are afraid to cut too close to the skin for fear of cutting a hole. Actually, a small hole is preferable to excessive tissue. Holes can be sewn; a spoiled skin is gone forever.

When skinning toward the head, go as far as possible, leaving as little of the neck as can be managed. The skin will start getting tight as you approach the head, so you will probably have to leave a few inches of neck intact inside the skin.

I am often asked if the hunter should apply salt to the skin. Salt is a necessary part of the process; however, only a professional taxidermist should salt the skin. Salt is a desiccant and will immediately start drying and hardening any meat that is left on the skin. In a very short period of time, the scraps of meat will become “jerky” and, therefore, almost impossible to remove without cutting holes in the skin. So let the taxidermist do the work of cleaning and salting the skin.

Your trophy

It is always best to bring the head to the taxidermist while very fresh. However, if necessary, the head can be frozen for a period of time. Some delicate areas, such as the eyelids, tips of the ears, and nose pad, which can and will dry out from freezer burn. Therefore, it is best to keep the head frozen as short a time as possible—just a few weeks, at most.

A mounted deer will grace a hunter’s wall for a lifetime. Therefore, do not hesitate to drive some distance to seek out a high-quality taxidermist. In addition, be prepared to spend more for quality work. Over the years, I have remounted literally hundreds of deer. Yes, the client paid twice—the first time for an inferior mount and then a second time for a remount. Moreover, be prepared to wait. Most hunting seasons are concentrated during October and November. During that 60-day period a professional taxidermist will take in a year’s worth of work. Unfortunately there is no magic machine that mass produces the mounts. Each piece must be done one at a time by hand.

It doesn’t matter whether a deer is harvested strictly for table fare or for the added bonus of majestic antlers—it is a trophy either way. Developing the skills to properly take care of meat or skins will add greatly to your outdoor experience. ▲

Time in the Woods

There is no better month than October to immerse ourselves into the pleasures of our leaf-laden forests.

IF ALLOWED TO tinker with the calendar, who wouldn't add another October, our most colorful and comfortable month? October is when everyone opens their windows to let fresh air in, but it's also the best time to head out to Missouri's forests, where much of that fresh air is manufactured.

Our impressive woodlands become impressionistic when shortening days daub reds, yellows and golds through the treetops and shrubbery. Peak fall color lasts nearly until the end of the month, tiptoeing its way from north to south. If you're afoot, trek the trails at conservation areas and nature centers. During peak color, every turn in your path will provide another gorgeous painting to admire.

There is no better time than October to plop yourself down into the leaf litter and just observe. Get there early and watch the forest critters wake up. Although squirrels, birds, skunks, raccoons, deer and other animals seem busier in October, insect activity wanes. You may still encounter chiggers or an occasional tick, especially on warmish days, but for the most part you'll have itch-free pass. Most snakes have gone into hibernation, too.

Scouting for the upcoming fall firearms deer season is a good excuse to head to the woods. Look for trails, crossings, rubs, scrapes, pellets and bedding and feeding areas. October is also a good time for fur seekers to scout for sign and to contact property owners for permission to trap.

It's hard not to think about October without considering harvest. Not only is the archery deer season in full swing, but the month spans the fall turkey season. One of the best strategies for fall turkeys is to walk through the woods until you scatter a bunch of birds, then sit quietly as the flock regathers.

Squirrel hunting also peaks in October. If you can find a grove of hickories, sit and wait them out. Otherwise, walk quietly through the woods. Watch the weather for a special opportunity to collect squirrels. Strong late October winds often strip leaves from the trees all at once. Squirrels don't immediately notice the lack of cover and behave as if still camouflaged by lush foliage.

A host of other hunting opportunities present themselves in October. Both rabbit season, which opens on the 1st, and ruffed grouse season, which opens on the 15th offer great reasons to spend days walking the woods. In fact, there are so many fun things to do outdoors in October that, come the end of the month, you may be ready for a little vacation time indoors.

—Tom Cwynar, photo by David Stonner

Fall color at Mark Twain Lake in northeast Missouri.

For More Information

Visit www.missouriconservation.org/8422 and you will find color updates, events around the state designed to help you enjoy the fall color, a link explaining why leaves change color and a PDF to download of suggested fall color road routes.





American Mink

This elusive semi-aquatic species can bark like a dog, stink like a skunk and romp and swim like an otter.

IF YOU'RE LUCKY, you might catch a glimpse of an American mink (*Mustela vison* or *Neovison vison*) bounding along a waterway, but it's a long shot. Difficult to locate due to their scarcity in Missouri, and even harder to spot due to their speed, brown coats and mostly nocturnal habits, each sighting is a treat.

These slender, long-bodied mammals look similar to the weasel but are not as long or thin. Their much-prized fur is dense and oily and composed of soft underhair covered by long, glistening guard hairs. Their chins are white.

Male minks are noticeably larger than females, ranging from 20 ½ to 27 ¼ inches long and weighing 1 ¼ to 3 ¼ pounds. Females measure 16 ½ to 21 ¼ inches long and weigh 1 ¼ to 2 pounds.

The American mink is found throughout the U.S. except for Hawaii, Arizona, southern California, southern and central Utah, southern New Mexico and western Texas. Your best chance of spotting one in Missouri is in the Mississippi Lowlands, where there is a systematic network of drainage canals and ditches. The most basic requirement for mink habitat is permanent standing water. Streambanks, rivers and the shorelines of lakes and marshes are attractive to minks, as are farm ponds. They will make homes under tree roots, in cavities in banks, under logs and stumps, in hollow trees, or in muskrat burrows and lodges, usually within 600 feet of the water. They are sensitive to water pollution.

The mink's webbed feet aid its semiaquatic lifestyle and diet. They are agile enough to catch fish in the water, as well as crayfish and frogs. On land, their speed (they can run up to 8 miles an hour) and aggressive behavior allow them to tackle much larger prey, such as rabbits and waterfowl. They also prey on mice and rats, muskrats, squirrels, eggs, insects and reptiles.

Breeding season begins in late February and mating occurs until early April. A single annual litter is usually born around the first of May, with the average litter size being 4 or 5. Males may mate with many females, but will stay with the last mate of the season and assist in caring for the young. Young reach maturity by 10 weeks and leave their parents by end of August. Individuals are not social outside of breeding and rearing young. Minks may live up to 6 years in the wild, but usually not more than 2 years. Their main predators are humans, dogs, owls, foxes, coyotes and bobcats.

While they are not noisy, this species is capable of chuckles, growls, barks, hisses, squeals and screeching. They also communicate by scent, secreting an odor from musk glands in their anal region that many consider to be worse than a skunk's. While they cannot spray, the musk is secreted during breeding season and during intense excitement or stress.

—Nichole LeClair Terrill, photo by Noppadol Paothong



For More Information

To learn more about Mink, visit: www.MissouriConservation.org/8339



Wilbur Allen Memorial CA

Bowhunters, birders and river lovers alike will hit the bull's-eye when they visit this area in the Ozarks.



WILBUR ALLEN MEMORIAL Conservation Area is a little-known gem of an area near the Manes community in Wright County. At 380 acres, this area is “small,” but it boasts lots of neat things to see and do for hunters, youth groups, families, floaters, anglers, hikers and birders — especially in October.

Named in honor of Wilbur Allen, the inventor of the compound bow, the area commemorates Allen’s contribution to the sport of archery. His family, in cooperation with the Missouri Department of Conservation, established this area in 1981. The area’s purpose is to promote bow hunting by providing a place where deer are hunted exclusively by bow. Other wildlife species may be taken with firearms during the prescribed season.

A mile-long stretch of the Gasconade River runs through the area, isolating the larger western portion of it, which is inaccessible by road. To hunt, hike or explore this mostly forested section, visitors must cross the river by boat at the area’s gravel ramp.

Youth groups and families will appreciate the area’s small campground that can accommodate two to three groups. Floaters might take advantage of the Department’s Buzzard Bluff Access, which lies approximately 6 miles upstream, to enjoy a one-day float trip from the access to the area. Anglers can expect to find excellent smallmouth bass and goggle-eye fishing.

Although the area has no designated trails, hiking is fairly easy along the river, on access roads and on the gated farm trail that runs through the fields.

The area’s three distinct bird habitat types — grasslands, riparian corridor and deep forest — give birders the opportunity to see a variety of birds. Scissor-tailed flycatchers and quail inhabit the grasslands, wood ducks and kingfishers nest along the stream, and pileated woodpeckers and nuthatches grace the forest.

All kinds of visitors will appreciate the area’s management treatments, including watering ponds, grassland manipulation and occasional timber harvests, which help maintain the area’s natural diversity and beauty.

Of course, activities on the area will be enhanced during the month of October, when the forest blazes with fall color, and the cooler temperatures make outdoor adventures more comfortable.

—Bonnie Chasteen, photo by David Stonner

Recreation opportunities: Hunting, camping, floating, fishing, hiking and wildlife viewing

Unique features: Campground with privy, picnic area and Gasconade River access

Location: A mile north of Manes on Highway 95, then one and one-half miles west on Radford Drive

For More Information

Contact by Phone: 417-256-7161 or visit www.MissouriConservation.org/a8112





Hunting and Fishing Calendar

FISHING

Black Bass (certain Ozark streams, see the *Wildlife Code*)

OPEN

CLOSE

impoundments and other streams year-round	5/23/09	2/28/10
Bullfrogs and Green Frogs	Sunset	Midnight
	6/30/09	10/31/09
Trout Parks	3/1/09	10/31/09

HUNTING

OPEN

CLOSE

Coyotes	5/11/09	3/31/10
Crow	11/1/09	3/3/10
Deer		
Firearms		
Urban	10/9/09	10/12/09
Youth	10/31/09	11/1/09
	1/2/10	1/3/10
November	11/14/09	11/24/09
Antlerless	11/25/09	12/6/09
Muzzleloader	12/19/09	12/29/09
Archery		
	9/15/09	11/13/09
	11/25/09	1/15/10
Doves	9/1/09	11/9/09
Furbearers	11/15/09	1/31/10
Groundhog	5/11/09	12/15/09
Pheasant		
Youth (North Zone only)	10/24/09	10/25/09
North Zone	11/1/09	1/15/10
Southeast Zone	12/1/09	12/12/09
Quail	11/1/09	1/15/10
Youth	10/24/09	10/25/09
Rabbits	10/1/09	2/15/10
Rails (Sora and Virginia)	9/1/09	11/9/09
Ruffed grouse	10/15/09	1/15/10
Squirrels	5/23/09	2/15/10
Turkey		
Firearms		
Fall	10/1/09	10/31/09
Archery		
	9/15/09	11/13/09
	11/25/09	1/15/10
Waterfowl	please see the <i>Waterfowl Hunting Digest</i> or see www.missouriconservation.org/7573	
Wilson's (common) snipe	9/1/09	12/16/09
Woodcock	10/15/09	11/28/09

TRAPPING

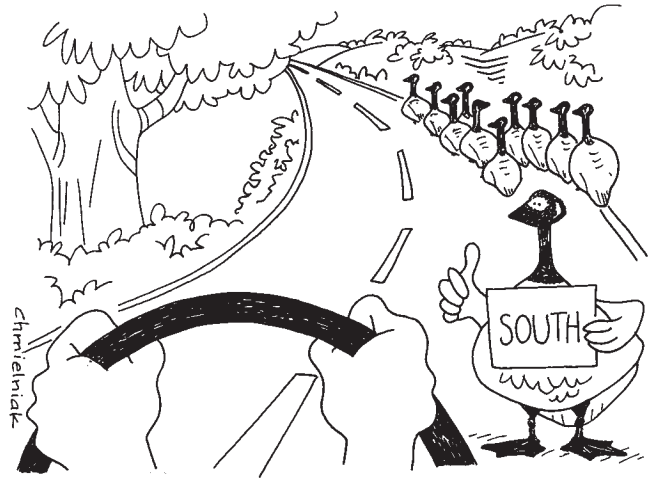
OPEN

CLOSE

Beaver & Nutria	11/15/09	3/31/10
Furbearers	11/15/09	1/31/10
Otter & Muskrats	11/15/09	see <i>Wildlife Code</i>

For complete information about seasons, limits, methods and restrictions, consult the *Wildlife Code* and the current summaries of *Missouri Hunting and Trapping Regulations* and *Missouri Fishing Regulations*, the *Fall Deer and Turkey Hunting Regulations and Information*, the *Waterfowl Hunting Digest* and the *Migratory Bird Hunting Digest*. For more information visit www.MissouriConservation.org/8707 or permit vendors.

The Department of Conservation's computerized point-of-sale system allows you to purchase or replace your permits through local vendors or by phone. The toll-free number is 800-392-4115. Allow 10 days for delivery of telephone purchases. To purchase permits online go to www.wildlifelicense.com/mo/.



Contributors



LARRY R. BECKETT, a writer, photographer and videographer from Joplin, discovered his enthusiasm for the great outdoors at a young age. When not fishing, hunting, hiking or raiding the nearest persimmon tree with his wife, Nicole, and son, Hunter, he volunteers as a Hunter Education and Bowhunter Education instructor.

Kids and fall activities seem a magic combination to NICHOLE LECLAIR TERRILL. She has fond memories of her own childhood trips to nature centers and harvest festivals, and remains enchanted by the autumn woods at night. Nichole lives in Gasconade County with her husband, Travis. She is the managing editor of the *Conservationist*.



JIM LOW has been the Department's news services coordinator for 18 years. He belongs to the Missouri Forestkeepers Network and uses thinning cuts and prescribed fire to keep the woods around his home healthy and productive for wildlife. Careful burning removes fuel, limiting the potential for severe forest fires.

DAVID MEGAHAN and his wife, Candy, live in Columbia. Their son, James, is a student at Truman State University. David established Columbia Taxidermy Studio in 1977 and co-founded the Missouri Taxidermy Association in 1981. David's mounts have won awards at state, national and world competitions.



WHAT IS IT?

Pillbug

On the back cover and right are pillbugs by Noppadol Paothong. They are also known as sow bugs, isopodes or roly-polies due to the way they roll into a defensive ball. Pillbugs breathe with gills, so they live in moist areas such as under rocks or logs or in leaf litter. They mostly feed on decaying plants and animals. To learn more about bugs in Missouri, purchase *Show-Me Bugs* for \$7.95 plus shipping and handling, and sales tax (where applicable). To order, call toll free 877-521-8632 or visit www.mdcnatureshop.com.



AGENT NOTES

Share the joy of the hunting season with a youth.

"DAD, HOW BIG is he?"

"Kyle, don't move, he is pretty close."

A few tense seconds go by and boom! My Dad's 30-06 hits its mark on the six-point buck. The buck ran only a few yards before it went down. We waited a few minutes before approaching the deer. My father tagged the deer and then he started field-dressing it. At that point all I could think about was the excitement and thrill my father and I had on



that cool November opening day of deer season. From that day on I have been hooked on deer hunting.

It has been 17 years since that hunt, and I can remember every detail. Although I didn't harvest that six-point buck, I knew from that day on I wanted to be a hunter. I started learning the ins and outs of all types of hunting. As I grew older, hunting became a very important part of my life.

It is a great feeling to go out during youth and regular firearms deer season and see experienced hunters showing our youth the pleasures of hunting. It has been a long time since my first deer hunt. The memories I made with my dad and family will stay with me forever, just as they will for any youth hunter. This year I encourage every veteran hunter to share the thrill of deer hunting by taking a youth to the woods this deer season.



Kyle Booth is the conservation agent for Pemiscot County, which is in the Southeast Region. If you would like to contact the agent for your county, phone your regional Conservation office listed on Page 3.

WHAT IS IT?

Our photographers have been busy exploring the intricacies of the Missouri outdoors. See if you can guess this month's natural wonder. The answer is revealed on the inside of this back cover.



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